

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-06

INFO OCT-01 IO-11 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 L-03 PRS-01 SSO-00 INRE-00

NSCE-00 EB-07 IGA-02 /069 R

DRAFTED BY AF/W-TWMSMITH:DFF

APPROVED BY AF-EWMULCAHY

D-MSPENDLETON, JR.

AF/W-GADIES (INFO)

S/S- HOGANSON

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY COTONOU NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 037491

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS:PFOR, DM, US

SUBJECT:CONVOCATION OF BENIN AMBASSADOR BOYA

REF: A) STATE 35258; B) COTONOU 253; C) COTONOU 256

1. FEB 13 DEPSEC INGERSOLL CONVOKED AMBASSADOR BOYA TO MAKE STRONG PROTEST ABOUT GPRB TREATMENT OF AMBASSADOR ENGLE DESCRIBED REF (B) AND (C).

2. DEPSEC BEGAN BY SAYING THAT HE DID NOT KNOW IF BOYA HAD BEEN IN CONTACT WITH HIS GOVERNMENT AND THUS HE DID NOT KNOW IF BOYA WAS AWARE OF RECENT EVENTS IN COTONOU. ON FEB 12, THE US AMBASSADOR IN COTONOU HAD BEEN CONVOKED BY THE GPRB FOREIGN MINISTER, AND TWO OTHER OFFICIALS WHO
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DECLINED TO IDENTIFY THEMSELVES. AFTER BEING KEPT WAITING

FOR MORE THAN AN HOUR, HE WAS SUBJECTED TO SOME INDIGNITIES DURING A TWO HOUR "INTERROGATION". THE US GOVERNMENT PROTESTED VERY VIGOROUSLY ABOUT THIS TREATMENT. THE DEPSEC SAID HE HAD HEARD THAT THERE HAD BEEN SOME SPECULATION IN COTONOU THAT US AMBASSADOR MIGHT BE DECLARED PERSONA NON GRATA. THE DEPSEC WISHED THE AMBASSADOR TO KNOW THAT WE WERE CALLING AMBASSADOR ENGLE HOME FOR CONSULTATION AND THAT HE WOULD BE LEAVING IMMEDIATELY. THE US GOVERNMENT VIEWED THE BENINESE TREATMENT OF THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE US AS DISCRACEFUL AND WISHED THE AMBASSADOR TO REPORT THIS VIEW TO HIS GOVERNMENT. THE US EXPECTED AN ASSURANCE FROM THE GPRB THAT THIS TREATMENT WOULD NOT BE REPEATED. THE DEPSEC THEN SAID THAT HE DID NOT KNOW WHETHER THE AMBASSADOR WAS FAMILIAR WITH THE EVENT HE HAD DESCRIBED, BOYA REPLIED THAT HE HAD TRIED BOTH YESTERDAY AND TODAY TO GET IN TOUCH WITH COTONOU BUT WITHOUT SUCCESS. THUS HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT HAPPENED. HE TOOK NOTE OF THE US GOVERNMENT VIEW AND PROMISED TO INFORM HIS GOVERNMENT.

3. DEPSEC COMMENTED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THERE HAD BEEN SOME DETERIORATION IN RELATIONS BETWEEN US AND BENIN IN RECENT MONTHS. IN RESPONSE, AF OFFICER VERY BRIEFLY CITED THE GPRB NOTICE TO LEAVE THE CHANCERY BY OCTOBER AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR US AID PROJECTS OF THE BENINESE NATIONALIZATION OF TWO US OIL COMPANIES 14 MONTHS AGO. WITH REGARD TO LATTER, HE NOTED THAT TEXT OF LETTERS TO COMPANIES RECEIVED FEB 12 WAS FIRST CONCRETE EVIDENCE OF GPRB WILLINGNESS TO MAKE PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPENSATION, ALTHOUGH COMPANY REACTION NOT YET KNOWN.

4. THE DEPSEC SAID THAT IT WAS CLEAR AMBASSADOR WAS NOT BRIEFED TO COMMENT ON THE EVENT. HE REPEATED THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO REPETITION OF THIS DISCRACEFUL TREATMENT OF US AMBASSADOR. INGERSOLL

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